



MEDIA RELEASE

Cheaper health benefits for seniors in New England

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FEDERAL Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce said in a win for seniors, the Government has delivered a key election commitment giving thousands more self-funded retirees access to cheaper medicine and health benefits.

Despite repeated attempts by Labor and the Greens to block it, legislation to index income thresholds for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card has passed Parliament.

Mr Joyce said this means up to 27,000 additional people will qualify for the Card over the next four years, on top of the 290,000 current cardholders, including 2,329 in the New England Electorate.

“The Government recognises that by looking after their own retirement needs, self-funded retirees save the nation considerable pension costs,” Mr Joyce said.

“The current income thresholds for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card are \$50,000 for singles and \$80,000 for couples combined, however with no indexation since 2001 income thresholds for the Card have not kept pace with living costs.

That’s why we took to the election a commitment to index the income thresholds for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

“Seniors and representative organisations have been calling for this change for years – and we have listened – unlike Labor and the Greens.

“This measure fulfils a vital election promise and demonstrates the Government’s ongoing commitment to long-term, meaningful reform for Australian seniors.” he said.

Annual indexation of the income thresholds in line with the Consumer Price Index will begin from 20 September 2014.

Principal Office - Tamworth

All Mail: PO Box 963, Tamworth NSW 2340
Shop 5, 259 Peel Street, Tamworth NSW 2340
ph 02 6761 3080 **toll free** 1300 301 839
fax 02 6761 3380

Tenterfield Office

255 Rouse Street, Tenterfield NSW 2372
ph 02 6736 1099 **fax** 02 6736 1433

